

## SHAKE A LEG



Reminiscent of the Hokey Pokey, keeping your balance on one leg while the other is moving is difficult. Try it yourself! Limb movements disturb balance. Practicing such a feat, though, helps participants better control their balance.

### ***Benefits »***

- ⦿ Facilitates kinesthetic sense for balance.
- ⦿ Practices balance recovery and postural control.
- ⦿ Uses visual targets.
- ⦿ Incorporates one-legged stance.

### ***How to Do It »***

Have participants stand beside their sturdy chair with one hand touching the back of the chair. Participants with walkers should use their walker for their balance support in front and a chair should be placed behind them.

### ***Belly Button Weight Transfers***

Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Transfer weight (belly-button style) onto one leg and then back to the other.
- ⦿ Repeat a few times, until it feels comfortable.
- ⦿ Transfer weight to one leg, hold, and steady yourself.
- ⦿ When you're ready, lift the other leg and pull that knee up in front of the down leg.
- ⦿ Do you notice that bringing the knee up to the front and center of the supporting foot better balances your weight more directly over the supporting foot?
- ⦿ Hold steady a moment on one leg.
  - Keep your gaze steady, ahead at the horizon.
  - Find a visual target to concentrate on there.
- ⦿ Touch the foot back down and shift the weight back onto both legs
- ⦿ Repeat.



### ***Shake a Leg***

Participants come into a one-legged stance and get steady. When they're ready, practice these variations. They can set their foot down every once in awhile to rest and regroup. Use the following cues.

- ⦿ Point the toe and flex the foot of the up leg.
- ⦿ Do ankle circles.
- ⦿ Good job! Try it again.
- ⦿ Next, bend and extend the knee. Do it again.
- ⦿ Be careful—go slow.

- ⦿ Rest time! Put your foot down. Rest, recover. Balance on one leg again.
- ⦿ Lift the leg out to the side and bring it back.
- ⦿ Cross your body with it.
- ⦿ Push it back behind you.
- ⦿ Put your foot down. Rest, recover. Balance on one leg again.
- ⦿ Switch legs to train both.

### ***Give It More Balance »***

- ⦿ Vary the motions randomly instead of doing the same motion two or three times.
- ⦿ Decrease length of rest time.
- ⦿ Dim the lights or wear sunglasses or Heads-up glasses.
- ⦿ Advanced: Do the activity standing on a balance pad.

### ***Keep It Safe »***

Make sure participants carefully find their balance over each leg before they move the other. Remind them to keep their gaze steady and on the horizon. Switch legs frequently to provide more rest. Provide lots of balance support—sturdy chairs, maybe on both sides; walkers; corners of rooms; and so on. Place a chair behind participants with poor balance or those who use a walker. Let them decide what they are willing to try. Monitor participants closely.

### ***Live It »***

One-legged balance is tricky business, but participants use it many times a day undertaking everyday tasks such as climbing stairs or stepping over obstacles. Shake a Leg is good balance practice for postural control.